



ONLINE WORKSHOP REPORT

# DIGITALISING COMMUNALLY OWNED LAND IN THE PERIPHERIES OF THE METROPOLITAN AREA OF GUADALAJARA

8 DECEMBER 2023



## ONLINE WORKSHOP ‘DIGITALISING COMMUNALLY OWNED LAND IN THE PERIPHERIES OF THE METROPOLITAN AREA OF GUADALAJARA’

As digital technologies gain prominence in the urban development of the Guadalajara Metropolitan Area, a crucial question arises: how will they influence urbanisation patterns and reshape territorial governance in the region? As part of the Regional Futures project, this online workshop addressed this critical issue by bringing together a diverse group of stakeholders, including public servants from the three levels of government, academics, agrarian lawyers, and landowners. Through this workshop, the participants delved into the processes of urbanisation in the metropolitan periphery and explored the potential impacts of digitalisation on territorial management.

### PARTICIPANTS

The workshop convened stakeholders from various backgrounds and institutions, all possessing knowledge and experience relevant to the intersections between digitalisation and land management, particularly those occurring in communally owned land, namely ejidos and comunidades indígenas. The table below details all the workshop panellists, the institutions to which they are affiliated, and the sectors to which those institutions belong<sup>1</sup>.

List of panellists		
Name	Organisation	Sector
Cesar Yáñez	Agrarian Prosecutor	Public – Federal
Irma Mendonza Moreno	Urban Prosecutor	Public – State
Rodolfo González	State Cadastre	Public – State
Norberto Marínez Gómez	Municipal Cadsatre of Zapopan	Public – Municipal
Jesús García	Indiginous Community of Mezquitán	Social
Josué Díaz	Institute for Planning and Management of the Development of the Guadalajara Metropolitan Area (IMEPLAN)	Public – Metropolitan
Héctor Palos	Ejido Copalita	Social
Ana Patricia Godínez	Lawyer – specialised in urban, administrative, and fiscal law	Private

<sup>1</sup> It is noteworthy that both the field of agrarian studies and the government institutions associated with land administration are predominantly male-dominated. Although the workshop organisers aimed to achieve a balance with at least 50% female speakers, accomplishing this goal proved to be an exceedingly challenging task.



## WORKSHOP DYNAMIC

The workshop comprised two panels: the first focused on representatives from governmental institutions, while the second involved representatives from agrarian organisations and other civil society entities. As part of the interactive format, all participants were tasked with addressing a set of thought-provoking questions pertaining to territorial planning, land regularisation, and the influence of digital technologies on the processes of urbanisation in the metropolitan region.



Subsequently, a Q&A session ensued, fostering discussion among the stakeholders and the audience.

## KEY IDEAS EMERGING FROM THE WORKSHOP

- The Mexican landscape presents significant challenges in harmonising public policies across the three levels of government. Participants highlighted the lack of coherence between federal laws and state or municipal regulations, leading to confusion and legal grey areas, particularly in the regularisation of informal settlements. Panellists emphasised the need for increased coordination among public institutions to benefit both citizens and the government.
- Despite the long history of agrarian institutions in Mexico, there are still numerous challenges related to the efficiency and transparency of processes followed by members of ejidos and comunidades indígenas. Bureaucratic procedures at the Agrarian National Registry (Registro Agrario Nacional) and the Agrarian Attorney (Procuraduría Agraria) remain excessively lengthy, adversely affecting how landowners manage their properties. Additionally, the geographical location of these institutions poses challenges for residents



in remote areas, making it difficult for them to travel to the capital city to start land regularisation processes due to temporal and economic constraints.

- Information gaps exist at the municipal level regarding land tenure, as seen in the example of Zapopan municipality. Cadastre records in this institution contain incomplete data, with some information still in paper form, requiring attention from authorities to address these gaps.
- Regarding the adoption and implementation of digital technologies, there was a general consensus on the advantages they offer for land regularisation and urban settlement management. However, participants noted the high costs associated with these tools. For instance, the expenses related to plot measurement and cartography have discouraged residents from participating in land regularisation processes.
- The fiscal dimension is crucial in assessing the implementation of territorial policies. Workshop participants emphasised the interconnectedness between the information municipalities hold on tax collection through cadastres and the transition of irregular settlements to regularised land tenure.
- The participation of local communities is key to the successful implementation of land regularisation strategies. Participants stressed the importance of public institutions investing efforts to inform those affected by regularisation programs. Furthermore, recognising the links between land tenure and quality of life should be a central element in these initiatives.
- In addition to challenges in land regularisation, agrarian nuclei face significant hurdles in maximising opportunities for managing their territories. Insufficient support from governments at different levels hampers the diversification of sustainable uses of these territories. Many ejidos and comunidades indígenas succumb to land market pressures, such as real estate speculation, due to the lack of alternative productive options.

## CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the Mexican landscape presents a complex tapestry of challenges in the harmonisation of public policies across various levels of government. The lack of coherence between federal laws and state or municipal regulations, particularly in the context of land regularisation and informal settlements, has resulted in confusion among both landowners and public servants.

The efficiency and transparency of processes related to land ownership, particularly at the Agrarian National Registry and the Agrarian Attorney, remain problematic. Bureaucratic hurdles adversely impact landowners, and the geographical constraints of these institutions pose challenges for residents in peripheral areas. Information gaps at the municipal level, as illustrated by the example of Zapopan municipality, further complicate the landscape, demanding attention from authorities to address these deficiencies.

While digital technologies offer promising solutions for land regularisation and urban settlement



management, the high associated costs have deterred widespread adoption. Moreover, the fiscal dimension plays a crucial role in evaluating territorial policies, with participants highlighting the interconnectedness between municipal information on tax collection and the regularisation of informal and irregular settlements.

The involvement of local communities is deemed essential for the successful implementation of land regularisation strategies. Participants stressed the need for public institutions to invest efforts in informing and engaging those affected by such programs.

In summary, addressing these multifaceted challenges requires a comprehensive and collaborative approach involving all levels of government, a commitment to transparency and efficiency in bureaucratic processes, strategic use of digital technologies, and a focus on empowering local communities.